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“Togetherhood on the Mountain” Celebrates Generations, Elevates Communities

At-risk students to be fed, inspired July 8 at Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield, part of service program for kids and seniors spearheaded by McCleskey and Northeast Cobb YMCAs

Marietta, Ga. (June 9, 2016) – Carefree frivolity long has been a touchstone of summer, but the season also creates a time when some kids lack meals and adult mentorship.

To overcome that plight, the McCleskey-East Cobb Family YMCA and the Northeast Cobb Family YMCA, both branches of the YMCA of Metro Atlanta, in partnership with respected community groups, will feed and inspire 45 at-risk Cobb County kids starting at 10 a.m. July 8 at Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield. The event includes interactive sessions led by park rangers.

“Togetherhood on the Mountain” – a pilot service program by the McCleskey and Northeast Cobb YMCAs – creates partnership among Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield, the Kennesaw Mountain Trail Club, senior mentors and Dwell Communities.

In Cobb, the fourth-largest county in Georgia, 44 percent of students – more than two of every five – receive free or reduced lunches during the school year. Kids participating in “Togetherhood on the Mountain” come from the Dwell Communities, where an even larger percentage of children receive reduced-priced school meals.

“ ‘Togetherhood on the Mountain’ engages a gathering of generations and shows that the Y is much more than a swim-and-gym. It’s a compassionate nonprofit that pulls together partners to make the Cobb community stronger,” said Becky Shipley, executive director of the McCleskey-East Cobb and Northeast Cobb YMCAs. “Kids learn from their elders, and older adults keep their spirit youthful when they share wisdom with eager audiences. And the highlight of the day – a battlefield picnic for underserved youth staffed by park rangers and attended by seniors – promotes the bond of togetherhood and a more vibrant Cobb community.”

Seniors from the McCleskey and Northeast Cobb YMCAs will prepare the lunches for the children.

“Seniors are always looking for ways to stay active,” Shipley said. “ ‘Togetherhood on the Mountain’ gives them a chance to exercise their bodies and their brains. They can explore one of Metro Atlanta’s richest historic sites as they share life knowledge with eager teens and pre-teens.”

Togetherhood is a national YMCA program that empowers individual members and area partners to collaborate on service projects that strengthen communities in ways that are fun, safe and rewarding.

"The Togetherhood partnership is beneficial for everyone involved: the National Park Service, the McCleskey-East Cobb and Northeast Cobb YMCAs, students and others. The partnership will create a more tightly knit community," said Marjorie Thomas, Chief of Interpretation for Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park.

“Regular exercise in nature is proven to improve children’s physical and mental health,” said Thomas, a former elementary school teacher and Forester. “Togetherhood is an example of a successful public-private partnership and is an opportunity to celebrate generations and elevate communities.”

To donate to the McCleskey and Northeast Cobb YMCAs or to learn more about volunteer opportunities for individuals or organizations, go to www.ymcaatlanta.org.

“YMCA members and community partners are the core of every service project,” Shipley said. “Togetherhood brings their ideas to life, and ‘Togetherhood on the Mountain’ is a great first example.”

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About the YMCA of Metro Atlanta

The Y is a powerful association of men, women and children joined together by a shared commitment to nurturing the potential of kids, promoting healthy living and fostering a sense of social responsibility. Every day, we work side-by-side with our neighbors to make sure everyone, regardless of age, income or background, has the opportunity to learn grow and connect. Learn more at ymcaatlanta.org.